

2011 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, United States



This e-update provides an overview of the recently released 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance (YRBS) data, a look at YRBS trends from 1991 to 2011, recommendations for how you can use YRBS data in your community, and other helpful YRBS resources that may be useful in your work. In general, YRBS data can provide valuable information about the health behavior of adolescents in school (nationwide and in your state). You can use these nationally representative data to further highlight the importance of preventing teen pregnancy in your state and community.

WHAT IS THE YRBS?

The YRBS is a survey that is administered every 2 years to students in public and private schools throughout the United States. The data collected through the survey are used to document the prevalence of various health behaviors among youth in schools, to describe the health of teens in the United States, and to determine whether the prevalence of various behaviors is changing over time. The survey methodology may allow for comparisons at the national, state, territorial, tribal, and local levels. The survey is administered to students in grades 9 through 12. The 2011 survey included 97 questions, 6 of which were related to sexual behavior.

NATIONAL DATA

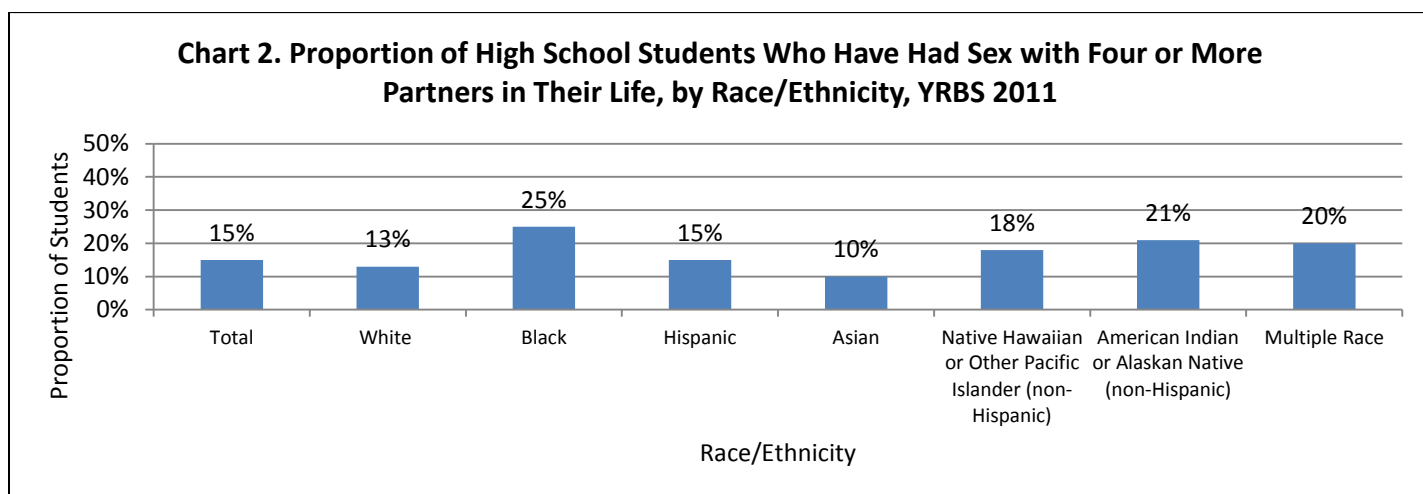
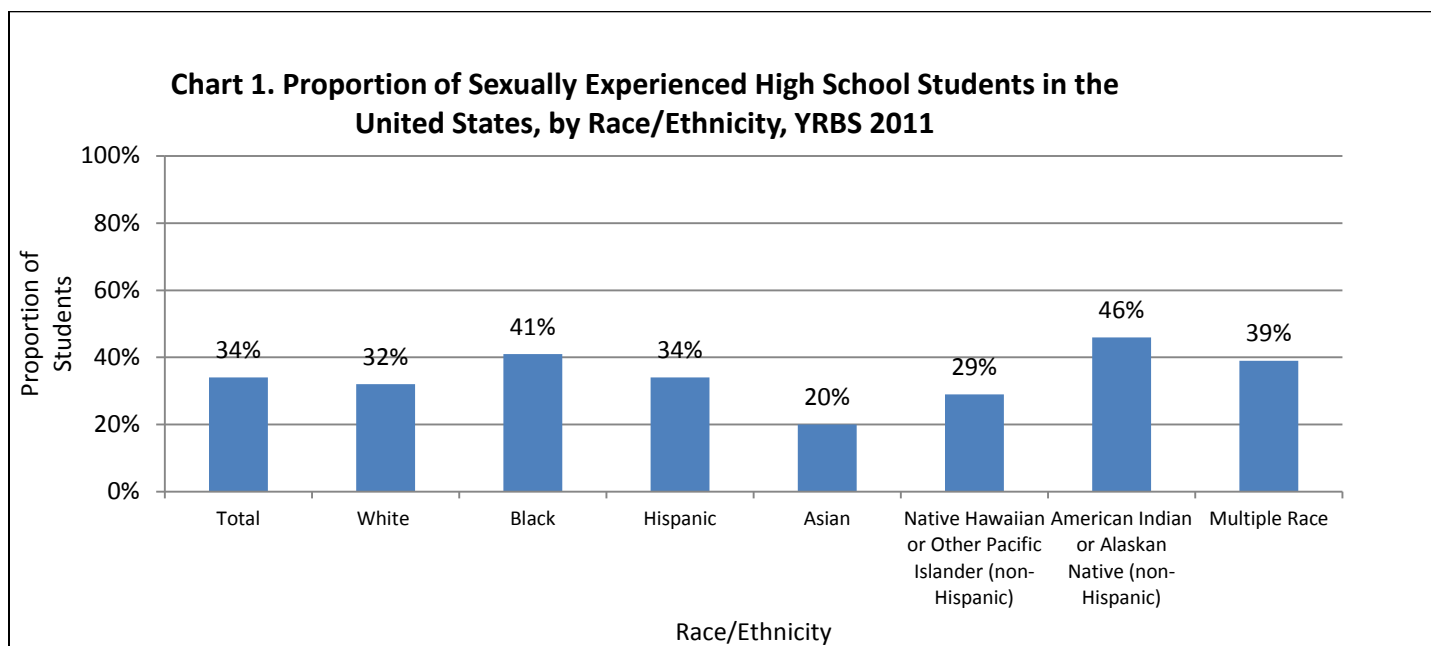
Sexual Behavior

In 2011, 47% of high school students in the United States had ever had sexual intercourse. The proportion of sexually experienced students, i.e. those who had ever had sexual intercourse, increased with grade level. Although only 33% of 9th graders had ever had sex, nearly two-thirds (63%) of 12th graders had ever had sex. Some important differences exist between racial and ethnic groups. For example, a larger proportion of black students and American Indian/Alaska Native students reported that they have ever had sex compared to white students (Chart 1). **Overall, the prevalence of having ever had sexual intercourse was higher among black (60.0%) and Hispanic (48.6%) than white (44.3%) students**

In general, very few students (6%) had sex for the first time before age 13. A larger proportion of black high school students reported having had sex before age 13 compared to high school students overall (14% vs. 6%). Male students were more likely than female students to report having had sex before the age of 13 (9% vs. 3%). It is not clear what proportion of the YRBS respondents who had sex for the first time before age 13 did so voluntarily. The YRBS reports that, “nationwide, 8.0% of students had ever been physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to.” The survey cannot tell us at what ages respondents report that this involuntary intercourse occurred. The prevalence of having been forced to have sexual intercourse was higher among black male (6.1%) and Hispanic male

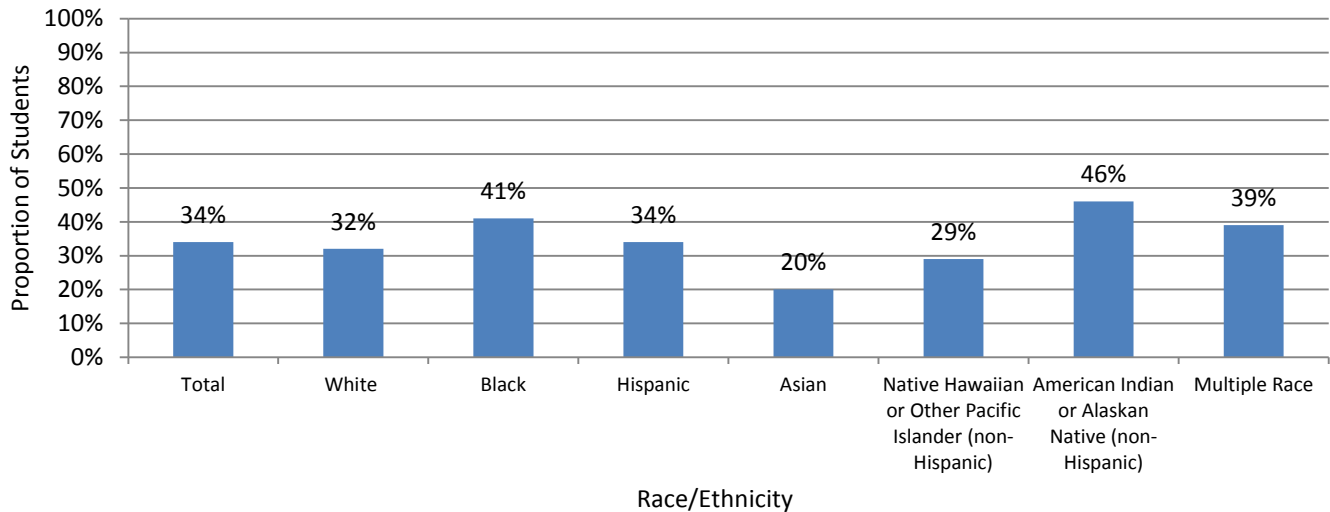
(5.4%) than white male (3.2%) students. Overall, the prevalence of having been forced to have sexual intercourse was higher among female (11.8%) than male (4.5%) students.

Approximately 1 in 7 students (15%) reported having had sex with 4 or more people during their life. This proportion increased with grade level, from 9% of 9th graders to 24% of 12th graders. There were also some differences by race/ethnicity: black teens were more likely to report having had 4 or more lifetime sexual partners (25%) compared to white teens (13%) and Hispanic teens (15%) (Chart 2).



Overall, about one-third of high school students (34%) reported being sexually active (i.e., having had sex in the previous 3 months). Similar to other measures of sexual behavior, the proportion of sexually active teens increased with grade level, from 21% among 9th graders to 48% among 12th graders. In addition, the proportion of sexually active students varied by race/ethnicity (Chart 3).

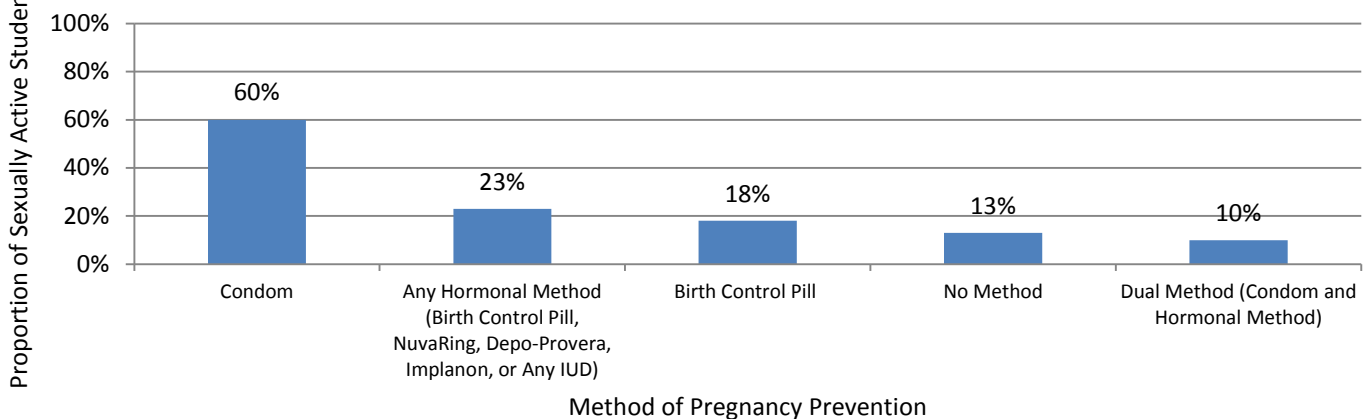
Chart 3. Proportion of High School Students Who Were Currently Sexually Active, by Race/Ethnicity, YRBS 2011



Contraceptive Use

The YRBS also collects information on contraceptive use among those students who were sexually active. These data indicate that condoms were overwhelmingly the most popular method of birth control among high school students, with 60% of sexually active students reporting that either they or their partner used a condom the last time they had sex (Chart 4). Nearly a quarter (23%) of sexually active students reported that either they or their partner had used a hormonal method of birth control, such as birth control pills, injectable birth control, the birth control ring, an implant, or an intrauterine device (IUD), to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex (Chart 4).

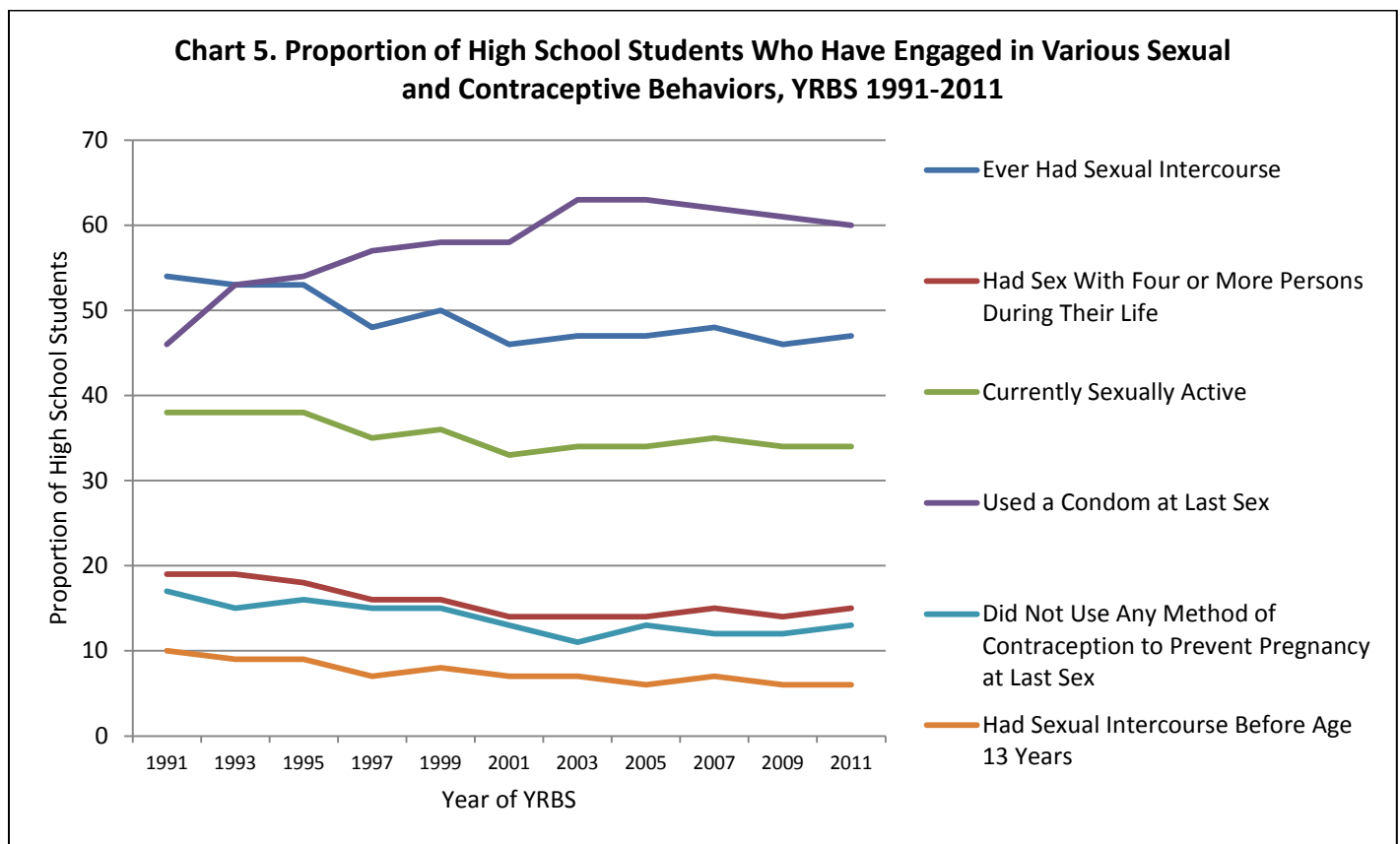
Chart 4. Proportion of Sexually Active High School Students Who Used Various Contraceptive Methods at Last Sex, YRBS 2011



Among sexually active students, the proportion who reported using any hormonal method increased with grade level, ranging from 14% of 9th graders to 31% of 12th graders. Although 5% of white students, 7% of black students, and 5% of Hispanic students used either Depo-Provera, NuvaRing, Implanon, or any IUD the last time they had sex, white students were more likely than their peers from other racial/ethnic groups to report using birth control pills the last time they had sex (approximately 24% among white students compared to 10% among black students and 10% among Hispanic students). Overall, 13% of students did not use any method of contraception to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex.

TRENDS OVER TIME: NATIONAL DATA

Over the past two decades, teen pregnancy and childbearing rates have decreased dramatically. However, when looking at trends in sexual behavior over time, it seems as though much of the progress made with respect to sexual and contraceptive behavior has leveled off since 2001. Chart 5 presents data about various contraceptive and sexual behaviors from 1991 to 2011.



When it comes to teen sexual behavior, pregnancy, and childbearing, the message from the 2011 YRBS is simple: **Mission not accomplished.** The fact that only 60% of sexually active students reported using a condom the last time they had sex and only 23% reported using a more reliable method, such as birth control pills or an IUD suggests that we all must be more creative and intensify our efforts to prevent teen pregnancy and parenthood.

STATE-SPECIFIC DATA

Many of these national-level indicators are available at the state and local level. In all, 47 states, 5 territories, 2 tribal governments, and 22 localities participated in the 2011 YRBS. Data specific to each of the states and localities are available on the CDC Website. The YRBS Youth Online Tool (<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/App/Default.aspx>) allows comparisons between states and localities as well as to the national data.

OTHER HELPFUL YRBS RESOURCES

State fact sheets on sexual behavior (<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/yrbs/factsheets/sexualrisk.htm>) combine data from the 2011 YRBS with information from other surveys into a concise one-page fact sheet. Information from the School Health Policies and Programs Study and the 2010 School Health Profiles data add more information to the YRBS data, and the fact sheets provide brief summaries of the state-level YRBS information.

The YRBS data widget with national or state data from CDC (<http://www.cdc.gov/widgets/#yrbs>) is available to put on your or your partners' Websites. You can customize the widget to show only your state's data.

Compare state/district results side by side with the national data (<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/yrbs/factsheets/index.htm>) to see a comparison and show how youth in your state or district are faring in comparison to youth nationally.

You can also compare state-level data with other states or the national results through the State Data Portal on The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy's Website: <http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/state-data/default.aspx>.

RESOURCE

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2011. MMWR 2012;61(No. SS-4). Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6104.pdf>

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